

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

KING COUNTY, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

SCOTT TURNER in his official capacity
as the Secretary of the U.S. Department of
Housing and Urban Development, et al.,

Defendants.

No. 2:25-cv-00814-BJR

DECLARATION OF CAROL
MENSAH

I, CAROL MENSAH, declare as follows:

1. I am a Pierce County Human Services (PCHS) Division Manager with primary responsibility for the administration of Community Action Programs. I have been in this position with Pierce County since 2023.

2. Pierce County Human Services (PCHS) provides assistance through vital services and programs to support people in need such as veterans, older adults, children and families. In addition to working with clients one-on-one, PCHS also contracts with community-based agencies and local providers to deliver services.

3. Pierce County receives funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services both directly and passed through from the State of Washington. HHS grant funding supports PCHS programs such as the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

DECLARATION OF CAROL MENSAH IN SUPPORT OF
MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION AS TO HUD
AND HHS - 1

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1 4. In my role as Division Manager, I provide leadership, oversight, and strategic
2 direction for the Community Action Programs Division. I directly supervise the supervisors who
3 manage the daily operations of the programs within the division. My responsibilities include:

- 4 a. Leading strategic planning to ensure programs are responsive to
5 community needs and in compliance with federal, state, and local
6 requirements.
7 b. Overseeing program performance, fiscal management, and compliance
8 across multiple funding streams.
9 c. Providing guidance and support to supervisors for effective program
10 delivery, quality assurance, and staff development.
11 d. Leading community outreach, engagement, and advocacy efforts to
12 elevate the voices of low-income residents and strengthen partnerships.
13

14 5. With respect to CSBG funding and programs, my responsibilities include:
15 providing leadership and oversight to the supervisor and staff responsible for the administration
16 of CSBG-funded programs; leading strategic planning processes, including the development of
17 community needs assessments and the implementation of service strategies that guide the use of
18 CSBG funds; ensuring compliance with all federal and state CSBG regulations, including
19 performance management, reporting, and fiscal accountability; and supporting community
20 outreach and advocacy efforts to ensure CSBG funds are directed toward addressing the most
21 pressing needs of low-income households in Pierce County.
22

23 6. With respect to LIHEAP funding and programs, my duties include: providing
24 supervision and oversight to the program supervisor responsible for managing the day-to-day
25 operations of LIHEAP; ensuring the effective delivery of energy assistance services; overseeing
26 fiscal management and reporting requirements ensuring compliance with all federal and state
27

1 LIHEAP program requirements; and supporting outreach and advocacy to inform the community
2 about available energy assistance resources and to secure necessary funding to meet demand.

3 7. Pierce County relies heavily on federal CSBG funds to provide essential services
4 to low-income households throughout Pierce County. Specifically, CSBG funding supports three
5 critical service areas:

- 6 a. **Transportation Assistance:** Helping individuals access medical care,
7 employment, education, and other critical services when transportation is a
8 barrier.
9
10 b. **Early Childhood Education (ECEAP) Support:** Supplementing the Early
11 Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) to maintain
12 service quality and accessibility for income-eligible families.
13
14 c. **Outreach to the community:** We have over 82,000 households in Pierce
15 County who live at or below the FPL; our outreach allows us to reach
16 families and provide access to critical services provided by PC and various
17 community-based agencies.

18 8. Transportation services (e.g., bus passes, bus transport, and support for auto
19 purchase or repair, including emergency services) support 252 individuals. This funding also
20 helps sustain early learning services for 280 children enrolled in ECEAP across eight sites in
21 Pierce County.

22 9. Pierce County has received CSBG funding for more than fifty years. The county
23 receives CSBG funds as a pass-through grant from the Washington State Department of
24 Commerce, which administers the federal funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human
25 Services (HHS). The plaintiff applies annually through the State's CSBG application process,
26 providing documentation on community needs, proposed service plans, and performance
27

1 outcomes. Compliance with federal and state requirements is monitored through regular
2 reporting and audits.

3 10. The total CSBG funds for program year 2025 are \$561,718. CSBG funds
4 represent approximately 100% of the budget for Community Action transportation programs, and
5 4% of the overall ECEAP budget.

6 11. Pierce County received preliminary award notifications from the Department of
7 Commerce in February 2025. Final grant agreements are typically issued upon approval of the
8 annual work plan and budget, with services scheduled to begin July 1, 2025. The grant amount is
9 \$561,718. What is currently at issue is the requirement to sign the certifications and assurances
10 necessary to execute the grant contract.

12 12. In addition to CSBG funding, Pierce County relies heavily on federal Low-
13 Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds to provide critical utility assistance
14 to low-income households in Pierce County. LIHEAP funding is the primary resource for
15 helping families maintain safe, healthy, and habitable homes by preventing utility
16 disconnections, restoring service, and supporting energy stability during extreme weather
17 conditions. Pierce County has over 82,000 families living at or below the FPL; these families are
18 eligible for our services, and we do a considerable amount of outreach focused on seniors and
19 other vulnerable households. Each year we serve over 7,000 families. LIHEAP supports
20 households with energy assistance, including electric, gas, oil, and other heating and cooling
21 needs. These funds are essential for preventing household crises that disproportionately impact
22 seniors, people with disabilities, families with young children, and other vulnerable populations.

24 13. Pierce County has received LIHEAP funding for 35 years, using it to deliver
25 essential energy assistance services that promote household stability, prevent homelessness, and
26 safeguard the health and safety of low-income residents.

27 DECLARATION OF CAROL MENSAH IN SUPPORT OF
MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION AS TO HUD
AND HHS - 4

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1 14. LIHEAP is a federally funded program administered at the state level by the
2 Washington State Department of Commerce. The plaintiff applies annually through the state's
3 LIHEAP application process, submitting detailed work plans, budgets, and projected service
4 outcomes. Compliance is monitored through federal and state audits, regular reporting, and
5 adherence to program rules outlined by HHS.

6 15. Pierce County's LIHEAP funds have been preliminarily awarded; the contract has
7 been executed but the county is unable to bill against it. The total amount of this award is \$2.6
8 million and is effective 10/1/2024-9/30/2026. LIHEAP funding presents 75% of the overall
9 energy assistance program budget for the county.

10 16. The plaintiff received award notifications from the Washington State Department
11 of Commerce on October 1, 2024. Final grant agreements are typically executed after the annual
12 budget and work plan are approved, with services scheduled to begin at the start of the program
13 year. The current issue centers on the requirement to draw down funds while attesting to
14 compliance with all future federal Executive Orders—without having clarity on the specific
15 language or obligations to which we are attesting.

16 17. It is my understanding that certain federal agencies have issued new terms and
17 conditions for federal grant recipients and that Pierce County is currently engaged in litigation
18 regarding these new terms and conditions.

19 18. If Pierce County refuses the new conditions and is denied federal funding, the
20 county and its constituents would suffer devastating short and long-term harm.

21 19. Loss of CSBG would create an immediate budget gap that threatens essential
22 household stabilization services and early learning support. There are no alternative funding
23 sources at the local or state level that can replace CSBG at the required scale. Critical
24 transportation services that enable access to jobs, medical care, and education would cease.

25 DECLARATION OF CAROL MENSAH IN SUPPORT OF
26 MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION AS TO HUD
27 AND HHS - 5

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1 ECEAP would lose vital operational support, risking the quality and stability of early learning
2 services for 280 children.

3 20. Even a temporary delay in CSBG funding would force suspension of
4 transportation, disrupt preschool operations, and potentially result in staff layoffs. Disruption in
5 preschool also has an impact on families who work both full and part time and rely on the
6 children having care and quality education.

7
8 21. The loss of LIHEAP funding would have devastating consequences for the county
9 including critical service disruption. Without LIHEAP funding, Pierce County would be forced
10 to immediately decrease energy assistance services levels, we do receive support for EAP via
11 Puget Sound Energy but it only accounts for 23% of program funding. . Some of the effects of
12 the loss of LIHEAP funding are outlined below:

13 22. Thousands of families would face imminent utility disconnections, leading to
14 unsafe and uninhabitable living conditions, especially during extreme heat or cold. We serve
15 over 7,000 households per year with LIHEAP funds.

16 23. In addition, the county can use these funds for distributing either furnaces or air
17 conditioners to energy-burdened homes. Last year the count provided 274 AC units and this year
18 we were able to supply 295 AC units to vulnerable families.

19
20 a. Increased housing instability as loss of energy services can directly lead to
21 housing loss, particularly for households with elderly members, young
22 children, or persons with disabilities.

23 b. Public health and safety risks would increase, along with economic strain,
24 as families turn to emergency shelters, crisis medical care, or other safety-
25 net services.

26 24. Even a temporary disruption in LIHEAP funding would result in suspended
27

1 operations, the inability to process applications, and loss of staff. The operational associated with
2 the potential loss of funding prevents the county from hiring staff, executing contracts, or
3 planning service delivery effectively.

4 25. Additionally, Loss of LIHEAP would directly affect 4.25 full-time staff positions
5 dedicated to energy assistance, intake, processing, eligibility determination, and client support,
6 and .8 staff for weatherization. These staff members are essential to program delivery and
7 compliance.
8

9 26. The HHS grant funding outlined in this declaration is vital to Pierce County
10 programs that impact significant issues facing Pierce County residents. Any loss of, or delay in
11 receipt of HHS funding will hurt Pierce County's most vulnerable residents.

12 27. I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.
13

14 EXECUTED this 8th day of July 2025.
15

16 *Carol Mensah*

17 CAROL MENSAH
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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on July 14, 2025, I served a true and correct copy of the foregoing document on the following parties by the method(s) indicated below:

Brian C. Kipnis Annalisa L. Cravens Sarah L. Bishop Rebecca S. Cohen <i>Assistant United States Attorneys</i> Office of the United States Attorney 700 Stewart Street, Suite 5220 Seattle, WA 98101-1271 brian.kipnis@usdoj.gov annalisa.cravens@usdoj.gov sarah.bishop@usdoj.gov rebecca.cohen@usdoj.gov <i>Attorneys for Defendants</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CM/ECF E-service <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Mail / Return Receipt Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Hand delivery / Personal service
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I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States and the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct.

DATED this 14th day of July, 2025.

/s/ Gabriela DeGregorio

Gabriela DeGregorio
 Litigation Assistant
 Pacifica Law Group LLP